UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.96/846/Part IV/6
18 July 1995

Original: ENGLISH

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE
HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

Forty-sixth session

UNHCR ACTIVITIES FINANCED BY VOLUNTARY FUNDS: REPORT FOR 1994-1995 AND PROPOSED PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET FOR 1996

PART IV. THE AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN

Section 6 - Northern South America and the Caribbean

(submitted by the High Commissioner)

GE.95-02323

IV.6 NORTHERN SOUTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

1. This chapter covers UNHCR activities in Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Haiti, Venezuela, Jamaica and other Caribbean countries.

1. Beneficiary population

2. At 31 December 1994, Northern South America and the Caribbean hosted a population of some 5,900 refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly Haitians, Cubans and Africans. UNHCR believes that there may be a higher number of persons of concern to UNHCR in the region and is pursuing investigations in this area. Indeed, initial estimates in 1995 put the figure at closer to 10,500. Further clarifications will continue to be made throughout the year as each country's statistics are re-evaluated.

3. The largest number of Haitian refugees is in the Dominican Republic whereas Cuban refugees are mainly to be found in Venezuela and the Bahamas. All the African refugees, mainly Western Saharans and Sudanese, are located in Cuba.

4. Most refugees are of urban origin and live in or around the capital cities. Over half of the total refugee population are men, women account for 22 per cent and children 25 per cent. Their level of education ranges from primary schooling to university. In 1994 UNHCR assisted about one quarter of the refugee population in the region.

2. Developments in 1994 and 1995

5. The restoration in October 1994, under international supervision, of the democratically elected regime of Jean-Bertrand Aristide made possible the repatriation of large numbers of Haitian exiles, the majority from the Dominican Republic. The change of regime also led some countries of the region to forcibly repatriate Haitian nationals residing without legal status in their territories. The foremost of these involuntary repatriations was from the Bahamas, whose Government concluded an agreement to this effect with the Government of Haiti in early 1995. Starting in January 1995 an allocation of funds from the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation was made to finance the expected voluntary repatriation of approximately 1,000 refugees in the Dominican Republic and to maintain a small office in Haiti which monitors the welfare of returnees and liaises with other organizations and government bodies.

6. Armed conflict over territorial claims between Ecuador and Peru erupted in early 1995, necessitating the resettlement of some Peruvian refugees in Ecuador. Another effect of the hostilities was the creation of over 10,000 internally displaced persons, both in Ecuador and Peru. The Government of Ecuador formally requested the United Nations Secretary-General that UNHCR participate in the provision of humanitarian assistance to these displaced persons, but this request was not granted. The UNHCR Regional Office in Venezuela continues to closely monitor the situation.

7. In an unexpected development, all but 20 of the 440 Haitian refugees in Cuba repatriated in November 1994, enabling a substantial decrease in the 1995 care and maintenance project. Following a formal request from the Cuban Government to the High Commissioner in 1994, UNHCR started a programme of assistance for 1,493 Western Saharan and 278 Sudanese male refugee students. Student beneficiaries in the academic year 1994-1995 are 1,133 Western Saharans and 89 Sudanese at the secondary level, with an additional 550 students -- 360 Western Saharans, 189 Sudanese and 1 refugee from Swaziland -- at tertiary level under the Albert Einstein German Refugee Academic Initiative (DAFI) programme.

3. 1996 Country programmes

(a) Objectives

8. The Regional Office for Northern South America and the Caribbean will continue to follow the same objectives in 1996 as were set out in 1995, namely:

(i) Promotion and dissemination of refugee law

9. UNHCR will continue to promote accession to international instruments by countries in the region which have not yet done so. In particular, emphasis will be placed on appropriate legislation to implement the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol in Venezuela, whose progress towards this end is slow, and to ensure closer adherence to Convention criteria by Ecuador and Jamaica. Further efforts will be made to support countries of the region to ensure that their asylum and refugee determination procedures are brought more into line with Executive Committee conclusions. The international principles of refugee protection and asylum, as embodied in the 1951 Convention, will continue to be disseminated through seminars, lectures, conferences and round-table discussions.

(ii) Assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees

10. UNHCR will continue to provide asylum-seekers and refugees with initial basic short-term care and maintenance assistance, counselling to promote self-sufficiency, and minimum support for income-generating activities where appropriate and feasible. Related to this is the intention of the Regional Office to conduct a more structured assessment of assistance resources and of potential, as well as current, operational partners in the region. Experiences, tested methodologies and programme management principles will be part of the review, to be carried out in periodic workshops. Preliminary data and contacts of this nature have been gathered already and an inventory of complementary assistance and reference resources, and institutions for all countries in the region, projected to be completed by the end of 1995, may lead to changes in implementing arrangements in 1996.

(iii) Public information/awareness campaign

11. Special emphasis is placed on increasing public sensitivity to UNHCR issues of concern through contacts with the media and schools. In 1996 Regional Office Caracas will continue the successful method of printing an educational

pamphlet for distribution throughout the region and to apprise various educational institutions of the work of UNHCR.

(b) **Proposed budgets for 1996**

(i) **Care and maintenance**

12. Assistance in Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela will continue at similar levels to 1994 and 1995, covering food, health, shelter and domestic needs. A small decrease of African students in Cuba will result in a slightly reduced allocation for 1996.

(ii) **Voluntary repatriation**

13. While allocations for voluntary repatriation movements are slightly lower than in 1995, support to returnees is envisaged to continue until the first quarter of the year only in Haiti while individual cases of voluntary repatriation from the region will continue throughout the year.

(iii) **Local settlement**

14. Of continuing importance in the facilitation of self-sufficiency of refugees is the Dominican Republic's cooperation in legalizing in the stay of Haitian refugees and allowing them to work. However, due to the voluntary repatriation in 1994 and 1995 of about 1,000 refugees and large-scale deportation of other Haitians illegally in the country, it is proposed to decrease the local settlement allocation considerably in 1996.

(c) **Implementing partners**

15. The main implementing partners of UNHCR in the region will remain the same in 1996: the Conferencia Episcopal Venezolana in Venezuela, the Secretariado Nacional de Pastoral Social in Colombia, the Comité Pro-Refugiados of the Conferencia Episcopal Ecuatoriana in Ecuador, the Centro de Trabajo Social Dominicano in the Dominican Republic, the Cuban Red Cross in Cuba and the NGO Justice and Peace in Haiti. UNHCR also counts on the valuable political and logistical support of UNDP Resident Representatives throughout the region, including the processing of payments to our implementing partners. The same partners and implementing arrangements are envisaged to continue in 1996.

(d) **Programme Delivery and Administrative Support Costs**

16. Variations due to changes in budget parameters are not discussed in the subsequent analysis (Overview of UNHCR Activities, Part I (A/AC.96/845) refers).

(i) **1994 expenditure (all sources of funds)**

17. The 1994 expenditure was higher than revised estimates mainly due to the Haitian operation which gained momentum from mid-1994.

(ii) **Revised 1995 requirements (all sources of funds)**

18. The revised 1995 requirements are higher than initial estimates mainly due to the ongoing programme of monitoring the return of Haitians to Haiti. An additional Junior Professional Officer was recruited for Venezuela.

(iii) **Initial 1996 requirements (all sources of funds)**

19. The 1996 requirements are lower than the 1995 revised estimates, because it is expected that the Haitian repatriation will end by December 1995 as well as due to the expected reduction in the local settlement programme in the Dominican Republic.

UNHCR EXPENDITURE IN NORTHERN SOUTH AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

(in thousands of United States dollars)

1994	1995			1996	
AMOUNT OBLIGATED	ALLOCATION APPROVED BY 1994 EXCOM	PROPOSED REVISED ALLOCATION		SOURCE OF FUNDS AND TYPE OF ASSISTANCE	PROPOSED ALLOCATION/ PROJECTION
			GENERAL PROGRAMMES (1)		
				CARE AND MAINTENANCE	
41.9	47.5	66.3	Colombia		62.1
458.9 a/	46.9	226.3	Cuba		211.6
84.6	84.2	57.3	Ecuador		57.3
42.0	68.0	46.4	Venezuela		46.4
7.0	20.0	40.0	Regional Project		26.3
				VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION	
755.7	211.6	211.6	Regional Project		211.6
108.0 b/	–	–	Dominican Republic		–
21.6 b/	–	15.0 e/	Haiti		–
				LOCAL SETTLEMENT	
0.5 c/	–	–	Ecuador		–
0.4 c/	–	–	Venezuela		–
469.3 d/	533.8	403.0	Dominican Republic		150.0
29.2	–	–	Regional Project		–
				RESETTLEMENT	
2.0 c/	–	–	Colombia		–
2.6 c/	–	–	Dominican Republic		–
28.5 c/	–	–	Haiti		–
6.8 c/	–	–	Cuba		–
1.3 c/	–	–	Venezuela		–
				PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Overview Tables (Part II)	
328.9	390.9	342.0	Dominican Republic		335.1
93.9	134.1	491.4 e/	Haiti		–
783.8	887.6	1,155.2	Venezuela		1,049.9
3,266.9	2,424.6	3,054.5		SUB-TOTAL OPERATIONS	2,150.3
				ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT See Overview Tables (Part II)	
42.2	51.0	82.2	Dominican Republic		82.9
96.1	108.6	96.2	Venezuela		99.1
3,405.2	**2,584.2**	**3,232.9**		**TOTAL (1)**	**2,332.3**
			SPECIAL PROGRAMMES (2)		
				EDUCATION ACCOUNT	
2.1	2.5	–	Colombia		–
4.6	10.2	–	Regional Project		–
2.4	10.0	–	Dominican Republic		–
				OTHER TRUST FUNDS	
832.2	–	908.4	Regional Project		–
3.6	–	–	Colombia		–
2.0	–	–	Ecuador		–
60.0	–	–	Cuba		–
				PROGRAMME DELIVERY See Overview Tables (Part II)	
82.1	–	101.0	Cuba		–
434.5	–	–	Jamaica		–
153.2	–	–	Haiti		43.5
				ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT Junior Professional Officer	
73.8	27.6	149.5	Venezuela	See Overview Tables (Part II)	65.5
28.0	–	81.0	Dominican Republic		81.0
1,678.5	**50.3**	**1,239.9**		**TOTAL (2)**	**190.0**
5,083.7	**2,634.5**	**4,472.8**		**GRAND TOTAL (1+2)**	**2,522.3**

a/ of which US$ 67,852 incurred against Other Programmes
b/ obligation incurred against the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation
c/ obligation incurred against Other Programmes
d/ of which US$ 700 incurred against Other Programmes
e/ allocated against the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation